

PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW MASTER'S DEGREE NURSING PROGRAMS IN BRAZIL

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The ability to train professionals with high-level and quality education has been an important objective of the process of developing and expanding higher education in Brazil. In this scenario, the growth of *Stricto Sensu* Graduate Programs, especially Nursing Programs, is prominent in all areas of the country⁽¹⁾.

In the Area Document of 2019, the Nursing currently has 78 graduate and 116 undergraduate programs, which are concentrated in the south and southeast regions of the country. There was a significant increase in the submission of proposals for professional master's programs in the APCN (Presentation of Proposals for New Programs) of the CAPES Sucupira Platform when compared to the academic proposals. Furthermore, new programs were approved in the 2017/2018 biennium, only one proposal for an academic master's program and three for professional master's programs⁽²⁾. Thus, there is a tendency towards a formation focused on professional practice, with the purpose of meeting the demands imposed by the labor market in the area. There is also a tendency to recover traditionally lagged regions, especially in the North and Midwest regions, seeking a progressive reduction of inequalities between the regions of Brazil and within the area of knowledge.

From the perspective of expanding quality programs, the Nursing Area considers the following criteria for approval: the region to which the proposal is connected, the vocation of the institution and the professors, the need for training for academic or non-academic markets, among other aspects⁽²⁾. Thus, new programs present, among other challenges, the need to discuss the vocation, considering the placement of their graduates, as well as the consolidation of the program to submit proposals for doctorate programs.

The establishment of national and international interinstitutional cooperations and the development of centers of excellence in teaching and research are also a challenge. Attention should be given to the relevance of structuring proposals that represent curricular innovations and broaden the interest of students in their own education⁽²⁾. It is worth highlighting the early insertion of undergraduates in research groups or projects, through Institutional Programs such as Scientific Initiation Scholarships (PIBICs) and Tutorial Education Programs (PET). The Graduate Nursing Programs also contributes to the training of basic education teachers by developing research projects and/or university extension in this area and training teachers for technical education (Professional Education)⁽²⁾.

Another novelty was the change in the program evaluation items, with a numerical reduction from five to three items in the new Program Evaluation Form and greater emphasis on the qualitative evaluation

of the professors' publications, highlighting the five main publications in the quadrennium. Therefore, the institutions seek the qualitative growth of the programs and their productions, as well as the formation of qualified, proactive human resources that act in an integrated manner to the needs of society, enabling the social access to the resources of science and knowledge derived from researches⁽²⁾.

The Area has also undergone major changes in the evaluation of journals used by the program faculty for publishing articles, with new classification criteria for the Qualis Reference. The journal classification methodology proposed by the Qualis Periodic Working Group (WG), established by Ordinance No. 150 of July 4th, 2018, was adopted based on the premise that each journal should receive only one classification, to be attributed by a 'mother area'. Based on the new methodology adopted, 343 journals were classified in the Nursing Area⁽³⁾. Thus, it is suggested that new programs analyze the possibilities of publishing the results of their research considering the new framework of journals evaluated by the Area and according to the new classification criteria adopted.

An important innovation of the last area document is the emphasis on Strategic Program Planning since it represents the possibility of a successful path for programs through a planned and organized expansion⁽²⁾.

Therefore, due to the recent changes in the evaluation criteria of the *Stricto Sensu* Graduate Programs in Brazil and the classification of journals, the recently approved nursing programs stand out with the advantage of early adherence to these criteria, increasing the possibilities of success in the actions foreseen in its Strategic Planning. Such programs are often only partially evaluated in the first evaluation given that they do not begin their activities in the first year of the quadrennium. Thus, they have the benefit of a longer period to organize, plan, and evaluate the program. However, such programs face the challenge of developing their research in a context of scarce resources since programs that have not yet been evaluated do not benefit from the CAPES Graduate Support Program (PROAP). Furthermore, they receive a restricted number of scholarships through the CAPES Social Demand Program (DS).

The current scenario proves to be challenging for the new *Stricto Sensu* Nursing Graduate Programs in Brazil. However, the recent improvement of the program evaluation process in the country allows new reflections on professional training, raising subsidies for a formation more consistent with the needs of the nursing labor market, economic and social challenges, as well as health indicators and social and development needs of the Unified Health System (SUS).

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How to cite this editorial:

Pessalácia, JDR. Perspectives and challenges for the new master's degree nursing programs in brazil. Revista de Enfermagem do Centro oeste Mineiro. 2019;9:eEditorial. [Access_____]; Available in:_____. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.19175/recom.v9i0.3604>